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ABSTRACT

Although research on argumentativeness appears to confirm the centuries-old "commonsense knowledge" that successful arguers enjoy arguing and are adept at remaining "cool and rational" during an argument, the empirical research itself is based on normative assumptions that underlie this Cartesian "commonsense knowledge." Normative judgments have informed the direction of inquiry and the results of descriptive research, which in turn support and extend the original normative judgments. An analysis of the conceptualization and research on argumentativeness reveals the following normative and pedagogical implications: (1) the success or failure of argumentation lies in the perception of the arguer; (2) argumentativeness apparently is a learned skill as well as a trait; (3) high trait argumentativeness is desirable in that it is correlated with many positive attributes such as flexibility, interest, expertise, dynamism, willingness to argue, and argumentative skill; (4) high trait argumentativeness has only a few undesirable correlations such as verbosity and possibly limited desirability and effectiveness in nonargumentative situations (although research has not yet investigated this line of inquiry); and (5) high argumentativeness is associated with people having a masculine (instrumental) sex-role orientation. Yet analysis reveals that these implications were implicitly present in the choice of basing argumentativeness research on traditional rather than contemporary argumentation theory. It is important to question these underlying normative/pedagogical assumptions in order to continue inquiry with the most reasonable and acceptable normative assumptions available. (Fifty references are appended.) (MM)

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ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DESCRIPTIVE, NORMATIVE, AND PEDAGOGICAL IN ARGUMENTATIVENESS RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The conceptualization and research on argumentativeness is reviewed to trace its normative and pedagogical implications. Although the research appears to provide objective inquiry which leads to descriptive results suggesting normative and pedagogical implications, analysis reveals that the implications were implicitly present in the choice of basing argumentativeness research on traditional rather than contemporary argumentation theory. Argumentativeness research serves as an exemplar of the interrelatedness of "is" and "ought" in inquiry.

There is nothing that a New-Englander so nearly worships as an argument.
--Henry Ward Beecher, Proverbs from Plymouth Pulpit (1887)

If in argument we can make a man angry with us, we have drawn him from his vantage ground and overcome him.
--Walter Savage Landor, Imaginary Conversations (1824-53)

When an argument is over, how many weighty reasons does a man recollect which his heat and violence made him utterly forget?
Eustace Budgell in The Spectator (1711-12)

Since the "age of reason" it has been "commonsense knowledge" that some people especially enjoy arguing and are adept at remaining "cool and rational" during an argument, while others do not share this inclination and suffer the consequences of "emotion and irrationality" when unable to avoid an argument. In the past few years Infante, Rancer, and their colleagues have conducted a series of studies that have empirically explored this "commonsense knowledge" by studying argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness (Infante, 1981, 1982, 1985, 1986; Infante & Gorden, 1985; Infante & Rancer, 1982; Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984; Infante & Wigley, 1986; Rancer, Baukus, & Infante, 1985; Rancer & Dierks-Stewart, 1985; Rancer & Infante, 1981; Onyekwere, Rubin, & Infante, 1987; Schultz, 1982; Waggespack & Hensley, 1987). This research is an exemplar of systematic empirical research which has important normative and pedagogical implications for several areas of theory construction: argumentation, communication and conflict, rhetoric, gender differences, and social cognition. I argue that as an exemplar of systematic research yielding descriptive results with important normative and pedagogical implications, critical analysis of research on argumentativeness provides deeper insight into the relationship between the descriptive, normative, and pedagogical in speech communication theory. I (1) describe and analyze the conceptualization and research on argumentativeness and (2) analyze and evaluate normative and pedagogical implications of the

research, thereby considering underlying reasons why the descriptive research yields the normative and pedagogical implications.

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION AND RESEARCH ON ARGUMENTATIVENESS

Conceptualization and Measurement

The conceptualization and measurement of argumentativeness is developed in Infante and Rancer (1982) which reports the results of several studies. Infante and Rancer begin by noting that argumentative behavior and motivation may be distinguished by an issue versus the person-as-object-of-argument distinction. Traditionally, legitimate argumentation is characterized by "a primary desire to discuss a controversial issue," while the ad hominum fallacy is characterized by "a primary desire to derrogate another person" (p. 72). Infante and Rancer label the former as argumentativeness and the latter as verbal aggressiveness.

This is an interesting theoretical distinction, but also a troubling one. It parallels the notion in communication theory that some people have primarily a content (issue) orientation, while others have primarily a relational (person) orientation, so research on argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness appears to be interrelated with research about content and relational communication (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1976, pp. 51-54) as well as gender differences that have been found to be associated with them (Pearson, 1985, pp. 266-267; Frost & Wilmot, 1978, pp. 32-38). The argumentativeness/verbal aggressiveness and content/relationship dichotomies also are related to a number of other dichotomies that have been traditional since "the age of reason": rational/irrational, logical/emotional, mind/body, and objective/subjective. This set of relationships is explored later in the paper. At this point, however, it is important to note that the basic distinction between argumentativeness and verbal aggression is based on very traditional

assumptions concerning the nature of argumentation that largely equates argumentation and rationality with formal logic. The ad hominum fallacy applies to a traditional understanding of formal logic, not necessarily to a more contemporary understanding of argumentation. For example, most contemporary views of argumentation view reasoning from authority or ethos to be legitimate argumentation (Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984, pp. 229-233), and so some attacks on the credibility of one's opponent in an argument also would be matters of argumentation rather than (or in addition to) verbal aggressiveness. This is an underlying flaw in the theoretical basis for drawing the distinction between argumentativeness and verbal aggression as Infante and Rancer do: the dichotomous categorization that they offer is based on a very traditional and questionable view of argumentation as essentially logical, excluding relational/emotional considerations.

Infante and Rancer provide a conceptualization of argumentativeness (p. 72) "as a generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues." They use Atkinson's theory of achievement motivation as a model for viewing argumentativeness as a continuum combining approach and avoidance where an individual's general trait to be argumentative is equal to his/her tendency to approach arguments minus his/her tendency to avoid them (pp. 72-73). Although in their research to date Infante and Rancer have focused primarily on argumentativeness as a trait, they note that there is also a state component. They hypothesize (pp. 73-74) that the tendency to approach a specific argument

(T_{ap}) is the total of the individual's trait tendency to approach arguments (ARG_{ap}) times the person's perception of the probability of success in the argument (P_s) times the person's perception of the importance of success in that situation (I_s), thus $T_{ap} = ARG_{ap} \times P_s \times I_s$. Similarly, the tendency to avoid a particular argument is a product involving the perception of the probability and importance of failure: $T_{av} = ARG_{av} \times P_f \times I_f$. They report one study that offers support for the combined trait and state view of argumentativeness.

This combined view of argumentativeness as both trait and state, although currently not well researched, is both very appealing and very troubling. It is appealing because it makes sense to avoid overly simplistic views of traits directly producing argumentative behavior across all (or most) situations. Although I may score very high on Infante and Rancer's argumentativeness scale, there are many situations in which, although I might enjoy arguing, I deem it unwise to do so for pragmatic reasons. This view is troubling, however, since no clear theoretical analysis is afforded by which seemingly contradictory views of human behavior as trait and as state are resolved. The authors only indicate that "motivation to argue" may involve both personality and situational factors. This, however, is not a very adequate theoretical explication of how state and trait can be combined in one consistent account of behavior. There are many ambiguous interpretations of what "motivation to argue" is, most of which see it as <u>either</u> internal to the individual <u>or</u> as external to the individual. How these views can both be true requires clearer theoretical explication. The analogue logic position (<u>both</u> state <u>and</u> trait) "makes more sense" then the digital logic position (<u>either</u> state <u>or</u> trait) (see Lanigan, 1982, for analysis of analogue and digital

logic in reference to communication), but an explanation of why it does is needed.

Infante and Rancer also appear to take an analogue logic position regarding success and failure in an argument. Rather than employing the view that one either wins an argument or loses one, they instead view success and failure in terms of each individual's subjective understanding and assessment of what it means to succeed or fail in an argument situation. By combining the assessment of both succeess and failure into the overall equation for the resulting motivation to argue ($R\ M_{arg} = T_{ap} - T_{av}$) (p. 74), Infante and Rancer contribute to a communication theoretic rather than to an information theoretic (Lanigan, 1982) view of argumentation.

Infante and Rancer note that the subjective understanding and assessment of success in an argument may include not only the notion of winning an argument, but it can also mean "persuading others, enhancing one's credibility, etc." (p. 74). The idea that the purpose of an argument can be to enhance one's credibility is very true, but it also reveals difficulties in Infante and Rancer's clear distinction between the content oriented concept of argumentativeness and the relationally oriented concept of verbal aggressiveness. Clearly one can use arguments to show one's superiority to another, and whether they are intended as such they may have that effect. When the researchers assume that "argumentativeness is not more than slightly related to personality variables" such as dominance-submission (p. 74), that seems like a dubious assumption. For example, in many years of working with and observing highly argumentative debaters I have seen many individuals high in both argumentativeness and dominance, and who used argumentation to establish

dominance and dominance to establish argumentation. The assumption that argumentativeness is independent of verbal aggressiveness and dominance-submission appears to be dubious--content and relational aspects of communication, in formal as well as informal argumentation situations, appear to be highly interrelated.[1] The idea that argumentativeness has little relationship to personality variables suggests the possibility that it is (1) primarily learned and (2) a skill if Infante and Rancer's findings and speculations on its usefulness (pp. 79-80) are valid. Although these implications will be explored more thoroughly later in the paper when considering pedagogical implications, it should be noted that there is again theoretical ambiguity in this position as to how argumentativeness can be both a stable trait and something that can be learned and unlearned (see p. 80).

Close examination of Infante and Rancer's argumentativeness scale (p. 76) reveals a difficulty due to the ambiguity of the terms "argument," "arguing," and their derivatives. On almost all of the items that score for a tendency to approach argumentative situations the item involves the idea of having an argument that involves issues. For example, item # 9 is "I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue." When the process term "arguing" and its derivatives are used, in only one case (#4) is the idea of "issues" not introduced. Thus the "approach" items seems to test for willingness to engage in argument as a form of communication that involves conflict over issues. In the items scoring for avoidance almost all of the items use the process term "arguing" and its derivatives and do not include the notion of

"issues." For example, item # 5 is "arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves. This allows subjects to interpret many of the avoidance items as being about the process of arguing, which may be interpreted as being relational as well as content oriented. This suggests that Infante and Rancer have not adequately considered the potentially different senses of the terms "argument," "argumentativeness," and "arguing," so that, for example, argument as a kind of communicative act ("he made an argument": $argument_1$), argument as a particular kind of interaction ("they had an argument": $argument_2$), and argument-as-procedure ($argument_3$) are not distinguished in their research (see O'Keefe, 1977, 1982; Wenzel, 1982). Although "making an argument" traditionally has been viewed as logically constructing an argument on the issues (based on conceptual metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS CONSTRUCTION), "having an argument" is both content and relational, (based on conceptual metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR) (i.e., see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 4-6, 61-65).

By the way they construct their scale Infante and Rancer are thus confounding the ability/willingness to engage in the construction of issue-oriented arguments with the ability/willingness to have an argument of any kind. Although it is dubious whether there can be a clear distinction between content and relational aspects of argument along the lines Infante and Rancer attempt to theoretically make, any chance for such a distinction is subverted by the manner in which they have constructed the items on their scale.

Research on Argumentativeness

More than twenty studies have been conducted by Infante, Rancer, and their colleagues based on the initial conceptualization and measurement of

argumentativeness. I will briefly review a few of them to indicate the direction the research has taken. Infante (1981) constructed an experiment which found that those high in trait argumentativeness differed from those low in trait argumentativeness on seven dimensions: flexibility, interest, verbosity, expertise, dynamism, willingness to argue, and argumentative skill. Perhaps the most publicized finding because of its positive implications for the field of speech communication was the finding by Infante, Shepherd, and Seeds (1984) that persons high in argumentativeness are least provoked into verbal aggression, supporting the idea that verbal aggressiveness primarily results from lack of argumentation skill. The implication is that training in argumentation serves an important personal and social function, enabling individuals to develop more humane ways of handling conflict argumentatively rather than by verbal (or physical) aggression. It should be noted, however, that verbal aggression was conceptualized as resort to ad hominum argument (see also Infante & Wigley, 1986). This means that the Infante, Shepherd, and Seeds study fails to investigate whether high argumentatives attempt to use their skill for relational ends such as domination. Thus, the seemingly powerful conclusion that high argumentatives are least provoked into verbal aggression stems from an exceedingly narrow definition of verbal aggression. Despite this underlying weakness, Infante's (1981) finding that argumentation skill and a number of other positive dimensions are associated with argumentativeness has been used to suggest that improvement in argumentation skill may lead to changes in the manner one attempts to cope with conflict.

Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, and Seeds' important (1984) study had a number of other problems besides the narrow conceptualization of verbal aggression.

First, it is not clear that the study results in trait argumentativeness. Subjects were asked how they would handle a situation with their (hypothetical) roommate, so they were asked to imagine how they would handle a rather specific type of situation to which their response may be a reflection of their assessment of the importance and probability of success (state argumentativeness) as well as trait argumentativeness. Second, in the imagined situation the content and relational aspects of the communication are likely to be closely interrelated, contrary to Infante and Rancer's assumption that they are separate. In the situation posited by the study, attacking "my roommate's character for having acted behind my back" (p. 72) can be a "legitimate" argument on an important issue, although not a rhetorically sensitive one. Third, in their discussion the authors suggest that the link of verbal aggression to lack of skill in arguing is that one sets up a defense around one's self because one cannot defend one's position, and so attacks on one's position are interpreted as attacks on one's self (p. 76). This is dubious reasoning and wanders far from the data given in the study. A possibly more plausible explanation is that people differ in the degree to which they see connectedness of content and relationships in arguments, or in the degree to which they depend on and perceive arguments as coming from and establishing authority.

Other studies have found that high argumentatives are more motivated to argue than are lows and are more likely to do so with other highs (Rancer & Infante, 1985), that "the more subordinates perceive their superiors are high in argumentativeness and low in verbal aggressiveness, the more the subordinates also will be argumentative and have job satisfaction" (Infante &

Gordon, 1985), and that people who are higher in instrumental (masculine) sex-role orientation are higher in trait argumentativeness than those who are high in expressive (feminine), androgynous, or undifferentiated sex-roles (Rancer & Dierks-Stewart, 1985). Recently Onyekwere, Rubin, and Infante (1987) found that high argumentatives are perceived as more competent communicators than low argumentatives, that there is greater communication satisfaction when interacting with high argumentatives, that high argumentatives are seen as more trustworthy, and that the situational factor of ego-involvement with the topic increases the motivation to argue of both high and low argumentatives.

Onyekwere, Rubin, and Infante also note that high argumentatives were "perceived as more appropriate and effective" possibly "due to higher motivational tendencies which often result in better performance, higher complexity of thought, and more appropriate social behaviors" (p. 22). The authors wisely note, however, that this conclusion is limited to argumentative situations, and cite Rubin (1985) in suggesting that in non-argumentative situations, "argumentative performance would be perceived as inappropriate or unrelated to the context" (p. 23). Consistent with this interpretation, Waggenspack and Hensley (1987) found that "people seem to prefer associating with a nonargumentative person in situations which are low in conflict and nonaggressive" and that both men and women share preferences to "associate with argumentative or nonargumentative persons in various interpersonal situations (p. 1). Precisely what makes a situation argumentative or nonargumentative, however, is not indicated very clearly by either set of authors. Indeed, it is questionable that any situation is really nonargumentative. Analysis of conversational argumentation (Jacobs & Jackson, 1981, 1982; Jackson &

Jacobs, 1980, 1981; Jackson, Jacobs, Burrell, & Allen, 1986; Trapp and Hoff, 1985; Trapp, 1986), analysis of children's argumentation (O'Keefe and Benoit, 1982; Benoit, 1983, 1986), investigation of argument at the cognitive level ("argument$_0$": Hample, 1980, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1985, 1986), and contemporary analysis of the nature of argumentation by argumentation theorists (Toulmin (1958; Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Willard, 1983) all indicate that argumentation is pervasive throughout human communication, not being limited to clear and obvious arguments since arguments may be presented in a largely nonverbal fashion, they are characterized by an understanding by the participants that they are engaged in an argument as much or more than by their form or situation, and they are present in on-going cognitive processing. This points out not just the difficulty in distinguishing a nonargumentative situation from an argumentative one, it also indicates the difficulty of maintaining a clear distinction between content oriented and relationally oriented argumentation since argument is not always identified by traditional logical forms.

Infante, Rancer, and their colleagues have done some interesting and in many ways exemplary research which has yielded very intriguing results. Unfortunately, however, their research is based on a very traditional and questionable view of argumentation that stresses logic and stems from Cartesian assumptions and dichotomies, rather than being based on an understanding of contemporary argumentation theory and research. They seem to view argument as formal and clearly distinct from relational aspects and situations in communication, although they fail to clarify precisely what they mean by "argument." Since a number of theoretical articles have worked to clarify

a number of senses of "argument," and extensive research has been done on informal and cognitive aspects of argumentation, this lack of attention to theoretical grounding in argumentation theory has been unfortunate. The general direction that argumentation as a field has been taking roughly fits Delia's (1970) argument that reasoning be "understood as based on the natural tendency of the psychological field to maintain a coherent and harmonious relationship among its affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements" (p. 144). Although the research has taken varied directions, it has largely followed Delia's call for rejection of Cartesian dichotomies and categorization that separates cognition and emotion. The research on argumentativeness clearly defies this trend, and by so doing yields normative, pedagogical, and theoretical implications that are important to critically examine.

NORMATIVE AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The preceding description and analysis of the conceptualization and research on argumentativeness has indicated a number of normative and pedagogical implications: (1) success or failure of argumentation lies in the perception of the arguer (2) argumentativeness apparently is a learned skill as well as a trait (a theoretical paradox to be considered later) (3) high trait argumentativeness is desirable in that it is correlated with many positive attributes such as flexibility, interest, expertise, dynamism, willingness to argue, argumentative skill, resistance to provocation to use verbal aggression, motivation to argue, superiority as supervisors, competency as communicators, producing of more communication satisfaction, being seen as more trustworthy, and being more appropriate and effective in argumentative

situations (4) high trait argumentativeness has only a few undesirable correlations such as verbosity and possibly limited desirability and effectiveness in nonargumentative situations (although, importantly, the research has not investigated this line of inquiry) and (5) high argumentativeness is associated with people having a masculine (instrumental) sex-role orientation. All of this suggests that high argumentativeness is a very desirable trait which people can acquire through training. Indeed, Infante's new textbook (1988) appears to be an attempt to develop pedagogical materials to provide such training.

Normative and pedagogical implications also are emerging from closely related research on verbal aggressiveness (Infante & Wigley, 1986), which is conceived of as having either a constructive or a destructive form (p. 62). The conceptualization is that assertiveness and argumentativeness constitute a constructive aggressiveness that produces satisfaction and enhancement of interpersonal relationships, while hostility and verbal aggressiveness constitute a destructive aggressiveness that produces interpersonal dissatisfaction and relational deterioration (p. 62). Thus persons high in argumentativeness are thought to promote relational development and satisfaction, while those high in verbal aggressiveness promote relational deterioration and dissatisfaction.

Thus a value system for certain kinds of communicative behavior emerges out of the descriptive research on argumentativeness and verbal aggression. This value system also provides a pedagogical incentive to "correct" "bad" communication behavior, which also happens to be largely non-masculine behavior. On its surface it appears that "objective inquiry" has led to

descriptive results which in turn suggest normative and pedagogical implications. The line of inquiry into argumentativeness thus serves as an exemplar of how the field derives "ought" from "is" (see Searle, 1969, pp. 175-198; White, 1981; Johnson, 1987, pp. 205-212). The apparent value of these normative and pedagogical implications is that they appear to be based on an "objective inquiry" into communication.

At least two things are disturbing about the ability to derive normative implications from the descriptive research on argumentativeness. First, this suggests that the clear separation of "is" and "ought" breaks down, and with it any traditional notion of objectivity along with the rest of the Cartesian dichotomies (Searle, 1969; White, 1981; Johnson, 1987). Second, if the distinction breaks down in the "is" to "ought" direction, it may also break down in the "ought" to "is" direction. In large part our descriptive research results may stem from normative and pedagogical assumptions. We would be especially advised to critically examine research when it yields results which the field would desire, as does argumentativeness research. There is a strong possibility that underlying normative and pedagogical assumptions have influenced the conceptualization, measurement, and research which in turn yields results that "objectively" confirm the underlying normative and pedagogical assumptions. This cycle from normative to descriptive and back to normative appears to have occurred in argumentativeness research.

How and why argumentativeness research has generated normative/pedagogical implications is instructive. One reason the research has generated its normative/pedagogical implications is due to the choice of basing the conceptualization of argumentativeness on the traditional view of argumentation as something which is logical. Underlying the inquiry is a set of traditional

normative assumptions about argumentation that see it as positive, logical, formal, issue-oriented, and separate from emotion and interpersonal relationships: the presupposed clear boundaries between content and relationship, logic-reason and emotion, and argument and personal attack function to protect the positive, valued nature of argumentation. These normative assumptions induce researchers to ignore questions about whether and how argumentation and relational-emotional communication can interact. Whether argument can be used to establish relational dominance and thereby attack the other person's self-concept is a question that never arises given the inquiry's normative assumptions, and the study of people who tend to respond to argumentative situations in a relational-emotional way is bound to generate negative evaluations of such a trait. A more fruitful line of inquiry might have been to explore how people differ in the degree to which they see and use connectedness of content and relational issues in arguing. Such a line of inquiry would of course have its own normative assumptions, but ones which would be based on contemporary argumentation theory. The choice is not whether to have normative assumptions that deeply underlie the basis for inquiry, but which normative assumptions appear most reasonable and acceptable as starting points for inquiry.

A second reason for the inquiry's normative/pedagogical implications is due to the assumption that argumentativeness can be seen as both trait and state while remaining consistent with traditional argumentation assumptions. The traditional argumentation assumptions clearly differentiate content (issue oriented) communicative behavior from relational (personal verbal attack) communication. The assumption that argumentativeness is a trait leads to an inquiry into whether people differ in their tendency to respond to communicative situations in an issue oriented, content way. Given the content/relationship

dichotomy, those with a low issue orientation are seen as failing to be able to argue effectively and having to resort to relational communication (personal attack), which is seen as illegitimate and ineffective argumentation. The apparent viability of the dichotomy and the view of the nature and value of the trait is strengthened by the view of argumentativeness as also being a state, recognizing that whether individuals approach arguments in specific situations is at least partially dependent on the individuals' perceptions of the probability and importance of success in that situation. Consequently, the observation that in various specific situations high argumentatives avoid argument or use relational-emotional communication to respond to argumentative situations cannot effectively be used to refute the dichotomy and trait claims. The inclusion of argumentativeness as a state, combined with the assumption that "legitimate" arguments do not attack the credibility of the source of opposition arguments (which is based on the assumption that argumentation is logical) functions to protect the content/relationship dichotomy and the view of argumentativeness as a trait and serves to generate negative evaluations of those who frequently respond relationally to argumentative situations.

A third reason for the inquiry's normative/pedagogical implications is the assumption that argumentativeness can be both a trait and a learned skill. Underlying the inquiry are two inconsistent metaphors: a mechanistic metaphor which informs the trait perspective and an organic, developmental metaphor which informs the skills perspective. Both of the basic metaphors of functionalist research are employed in the inquiry, and this results in an inconsistency (see Putnam, 1982). Adding the organic, developmental metaphor to the mechanistic metaphor enables the inquiry to more readily generate pedagogical implications even though there is considerable tension between the view of argumentativeness as a stable personality trait and argumentativeness as a skill which can be

developed.

Although research on argumentativeness appears to confirm the centuries-old "commonsense knowledge" that successful arguers enjoy arguing and are adept at remaining "cool and rational" during an argument, while others do not share this inclination and suffer the consequences of "emotion and irrationality" when unable to avoid an argument, the empirical research itself is based on normative assumptions that underlie this Cartesian "commonsense knowledge." Thus normative judgements have been used which inform the direction of inquiry and the results of descriptive research which in turn support and extend the original normative judgements. This is not a criticism unique to argumentativeness research, however. Because the Cartesian separation of organism and environment, of objectivity and subjectivity, of mind and body, of reason and emotion, etc., breaks down, this interpenetration of the descriptive and the normative/pedagogical exists to varying degrees in all empirical (and non-empirical) research.[2] Our task is to employ careful criticism to uncover its existence and question underlying normative/pedagogical assumptions in order to continue inquiry with the most reasonable and acceptable normative assumptions available to our contemporary understanding.[3]

NOTES

[1]Indeed, in developing the content/relationship distinction Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967, pp. 51-54) note the interrelationship of content and relationship, with relational communication performing a metacommunicative function for content communication.

[2]See Johnson (1987), Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) for an emerging epistemology that combines realism and pragmatism while rejecting Cartesian assumptions. As Johnson notes (pp. 205-212), however, the rejection of Cartesian objectivism does not mean the rejection of realism.

[3]I want to thank Joe Scudder for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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